



Free Methodist Historical Society

Newsletter

SUMMER/FALL 2002 □ Volume 3, No. 1

B. T. Roberts
(1823-93)

Mid-America Conference Preserves Its History

Often in the Historical Center we try to trace the annual conference ancestry of a particularly old church, sometimes with difficulty. In such cases a prime source is local and conference histories, often written from material stored and maintained in conference offices.

The Mid-America Conference is one place where valuable history is being preserved. Under the direction of Betty Wayman, conference historian, the conference maintains a historical archive at the Oak Park Retreat Center in Perkins, Oklahoma.

The Mid-America historical room includes current as well as historical material on annual conferences, on women, and concerning Deaconess Hospital. The collection consists of correspondence, local church records, photographs, curios, and other items. Historians Betty Wayman and Joyce Farley encourage church members to contribute materials concerning their congregations, as a separate file on each church is maintained.

We are pleased to learn of historical collections in the different conferences. We will highlight these from time to time as we receive the news.

Meet Our Volunteer: Brenda Iaquinto

Last autumn the Historical Center had the good fortune to connect with Brenda Iaquinto. Since then Ms. Iaquinto has been busily at work as a volunteer helping the Center index its collection of cassette tapes.

A life-long Free Methodist with an interest in history, Brenda brings knowledge and enthusiasm

to a task that requires both. She points out, however, that the enterprise has its benefits: it enables her to listen to a stellar array of FM preachers and to take sustenance from messages delivered decades ago.



Why B.T. Roberts Favored the "Death Tax"

In 1886 Benjamin T. Roberts published a little book entitled *First Lessons on Money*. His advice and public policy recommendations are interesting to read today when the estate tax (the so-called "death tax") has become a much-debated political issue.

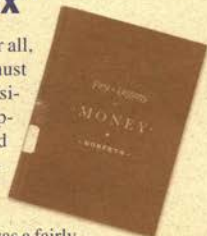
Roberts' book was partly a manual on stewardship, partly a call for economic reform. "The people should see to it that their representatives in Congress pass laws in their interest, and not in favor of the moneyed class and rich corporations to the injury of community generally," he wrote. Based on biblical principles, he argued that "vast accumulations of fortune in the hands of a few" were harmful and caused civil unrest.

To implement this view, Roberts proposed that inheritance taxes be increased. "Our laws should make provision for the breaking up of great estates upon the death of the owners." To pro-

vide adequate opportunity for all, "the whole bent of our laws must be unfavorable to the acquisition of a vast amount of property by any one person, and to the handing of it down unbroken from generation to generation."

First Lessons on Money was a fairly radical challenge to the dominant business practices of his day. Yet in time many of his proposals, including the nation's first anti-trust legislation, were championed by leaders such as Theodore Roosevelt and others and became law.

Roberts' position on estate taxes, and the reasons he gave, are worth pondering today when political leaders of all shades debate the issue, but often without the depth of moral concern that Roberts showed.



Published by the
**Marston Memorial
Historical Center**

Cathy Fortner, Director
Kate McGinn, Archivist

World Ministries Center
Box 535002
770 N High School Road
Indianapolis, IN 46253-5002

(800) 342-5531

E-mail: history@fmcna.org

Website:
www.freemethodistchurch.org
(Select About Us, then click
on Marston Historical Center)

Editorial Committee

Howard Snyder, Editor
Cathy Fortner
David Bundy
Kate McGinn

Layout & Design

Andrea Anibal

The Mission of the Free Methodist Historical Society is to preserve Free Methodist heritage and transmit it faithfully to each generation in order to assist the Free Methodist Church in fulfilling its mission.

Recovering History: My Experience As a War



Rev. and Mrs. Omi (Pacific Coast Japanese Conference) and family at the time of evacuation in Southern California

September 11, 2001 has frequently been compared with December 7, 1941. The terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center in New York City and the Pentagon in Washington, D.C., have some similarities to the surprise attack on the Pacific Fleet based at Pearl Harbor. September 11 launched America into "a new kind of war," the first war of the 21st century. December 7 launched America into World War II. September 11 triggered anti-Arab and anti-Islamic hysteria. December 7 triggered anti-Japanese hysteria.

One critical difference stands out between these

two significant dates: with the rise of anti-Arab sentiments following September 11, President George W. Bush has vigorously appealed to all Americans to make a distinction between Arab-Americans and Arab/Muslim terrorists. On the other hand, anti-Japanese sentiment following December 7 was further exacerbated by Executive Order 9066 issued by President Franklin D. Roosevelt removing 120,000 Japanese, including United States citizens of Japanese ancestry, from the West Coast. Ten concentration camps were hastily erected to detain Japanese throughout the duration of the war.

I was a young boy of nine when Japan attacked Pearl Harbor. My father, the Rev. Yoshimasa Shigekawa, was the pastor of the Japanese Free Methodist Church in Los Angeles. In February 1942, all Japanese on the West Coast, regardless of citizenship, were or-

dered to relocate to designated camps. We were allowed to take with us only what we could carry.

Some families were moved temporarily into assembly centers such as the Santa Anita race track in Arcadia where they occupied stalls ordinarily reserved for the horses. They were then relocated to permanent camps. Our family (my parents and four of seven children) was spared the double move. On the morning of May 27, 1942, we assembled at the freight depot of the Santa Fe Railroad in Los Angeles and boarded a train bound for Parker, Arizona. The 200-mile trip took all day. From Parker, we were transported by truck to our camp — Poston, Arizona — along the eastern bank of the Colorado River. Each family was registered and assigned a room in a barrack. Barracks were tar-paper covered buildings, 100 feet by 25 feet, divided into four living quarters. Our family of six was assigned a single room, 25 by 25 feet, with no partitions. Communal bathrooms were provided for each block of 14 barracks along with a mess hall where all of our meals were served.

Initially, we were literally suspect wartime detainees held by the American government. We were transported by the military. Our camps were patrolled by Military Police stationed in guard towers. For all practical purposes, we were "prisoners of war."

My dad was a ministerial member of the Pacific Coast Japanese Free Methodist Conference which was established in 1932. Our conference consisted of five churches. Our members were placed in several different camps. In these camps, all denominational distinctions were erased. We simply worshipped as Protestants, Catholics, or Buddhists. Christian churches were established in various sections of the camp. My dad was assigned to minister to one of the Japanese-speaking congregations. Several of our young conference ministers received their initial "on the job" training as they served congregations in these camps. For the first time, all Christians regardless of denominational persuasion worshipped together as one body.

Although the camps were occupied until the conclusion of the war, our family (which by this time included only my parents and me) moved to Gallup, New Mexico, in November 1944 where my dad pastored a small congregation of Japanese Free Methodists living

Ernest Ward's Curious Fascination with Triads

Ernest Ward and his wife Phoebe were the first missionaries supported by the Free Methodist Church to serve in the foreign field. During his long missionary service in India, beginning in 1881, Ward achieved his greatest success as a linguist, builder, and evangelist.

This rather sparse description would have touched the heart of a man who spent countless hours collecting *triads*, or sets of three.

Ward defined a triad as "a group of three names, numbers, symbols, ideas, facts, or

fancies which usually have some relationship (near or remote) to each other." He recommended to all the memorization of hundreds of triads as a "utility in helping to perpetuate knowledge."

Ward's seven volumes of over 13,000 triads are housed in the Marston Memorial Historical Center. A *Bartlett's Quotations* of sorts, Ward's volumes serve as more than a compendium of other people's ideas; they chronicle the missionary's life in a unique way. Not only do they suggest a talent for

language (Ward was fluent in Urdu, Hindi, and English) and organization; they also depict a man of breadth and perseverance. Ward casually included triads from the *Koran* and the *Bhagavad-Gita* alongside those from the Gospel of Luke. Lines from the ancient Greeks rested comfortably beside ones pulled from contemporary newspapers. Moreover, the pages show the disintegration of Ward's strong and neat script during his long and industrious life. Ward lived until 1938.

Time Detainee

by David K. Shigekawa

in that remote railroad/coal mining town.

Before World War II, our Japanese Free Methodist congregations were Japanese-speaking (consisting of first generation Japanese referred to as "Issei"). Our youth and children were ministered to in English with the help of Free Methodist missionaries such as Alice Fensome, Betty Ellen Cox, Dorcas Early, and others.

Following our return to the West Coast and the re-establishment of our pre-war churches, our second generation "Nisei" Christians felt the need to initiate an English-speaking ministry. Since the mid-1940s, our churches have offered ministries in both languages.

The anti-Japanese sentiment and evacuation of Japanese-Americans in 1942 spurred a wave of pro-American activities, most notably the achievements of the highly decorated 442nd Infantry Battalion of the United States Army. While being detained in concentration camps, many Japanese-American men and women volunteered to serve in the United States Armed Forces serving in Europe. Many gave their lives. These acts of heroism demonstrated such loyalty to our country that all suspicion and doubts were removed.

As I reflect upon my experience as a wartime detainee, I feel I have no negative scars which have adversely affected my life. I was a Free Methodist minister's son who had moved twice in eight years. We lost very little as a result of relocation. However, many lost their businesses; others lost educational and vocational opportunities. Some even lost their health due to the traumatic uprooting. Many could never recover their losses. Some were bitter; others reluctantly complied with government orders. Many simply faced the situation, however unjust it may have been, and made the most of their circumstances. They transformed the negative into positive gains.

Following September 11, Americans have been applauded for their strength and resiliency. I believe Japanese-Americans in 1942, for the most part, were very strong and resilient. And during the past 60 years, we have left a positive mark on the American way of life, both in the church and also in the larger society.

Today my reflections are: May the events of September 11 and



A well-established Free Methodist Japanese Church in Berkeley (CA), pictured here more than a decade before December 7, 1941.

the war against terrorism serve to unite our nation *under God* and may the sudden surge of patriotism restore the human and spiritual values upon which our great nation was built.

Bibliographic Note: The story of Japanese-American Free Methodist detainees during World War II is a nearly forgotten chapter in Free Methodist history. It is not mentioned specifically in Marston's *From Age to Age A Living Witness*; B. S. Lamson in *Venture! The Frontiers of Free Methodism* notes only, in his chronology of the Pacific Coast Japanese Conference: "1942 - Japanese population moved to inland camps" (p. 262). David McKenna in *A Future with a History: The Wesleyan Witness of the Free Methodist Church* records that the 1964 FM General Conference adopted a resolution of apology for the wartime detention of Japanese-American Free Methodists. On the more general topic of the Japanese American experience, resources include the Japanese American National Museum in Los Angeles (www.janm.org) and *Growing Up Nisei: Race, Generation, and Culture among Japanese Americans of California, 1924-49*, by David Yoo (University of Illinois Press, 2000).



David Shigekawa, now retired, served for many years as a pastor and leader in the Pacific Coast Japanese Conference and on various denominational committees and boards. Currently

he is a member of the Committee on Free Methodist History and Archives. He and his wife Nancy live in Monterey Park, California.

News

Ward noted that triads abound in the archives of history, literature, and folklore. He apparently felt there was a certain mystery attached to the number three (perhaps because of the Trinity?), but also that triads were simply aids to the memory; words and ideas found "in a happy shape for the average mind to grasp and retain." "The triad is usually found to be an even balance, not too small to cover the ground, nor yet so large as to burden the memory."

— Kate McGinn

o
t
e
s

• THE CHURCH OF THE NAZARENE ARCHIVES in Kansas City has expanded and updated its website, reports Stan Ingersol, Archivist. The new Internet address is: www.nazarene.org/headquarters/archives/index.html.

• A group of FREE METHODIST WORKERS FROM MIDWEST CITY (OK) FMC will be spending several days at the Historical Center this summer helping with several projects, including re-housing our large collection of photographs. Contributions toward the purchase of

photo-protection storage supplies would be welcome to help with this project.

• EXTRA COPIES of the Newsletter free of charge are available upon request (up to ten copies to one address). If you wish to hand out the current or back issues to friends or family, you can make your request by email at History@fmcna.org.

• GENERAL CONFERENCE 2003 in Seattle will include special events on Free Methodist history, including an FM Heritage Luncheon. If you are to be in the area, plan to attend.

Book Review

Founding Brothers: The Revolutionary Generation, by Joseph J. Ellis
(New York, NY: Alfred A. Knopf, 2000). 288 pp. ISBN: 0-375-40544-5.

The best thing about this engaging book is the way the author takes the staid portraits of the Founding Fathers down from the wall and gives them flesh and blood, passions and motivations, showing their sometimes conflicting visions of what the infant United States should be.

This is not a debunking book, however. Washington, Jefferson, and the others remain heroes at the end of the book. But the reader comes to see how very human they were, and that the ultimately successful launching of the American experiment involved struggle and compromise and might well have gone otherwise.

Ellis, Professor of History at Mount Holyoke College, has written several books on U.S. history including *American Sphinx: The Character of Thomas Jefferson*. In this book he focuses particularly on James Madison, Alexander Hamilton, Aaron Burr, George Washington, John Adams, Thomas Jefferson, and Benjamin Franklin. Each chapter highlights the relationship between two of these seven. Through these stories Ellis covers U.S. history from the Declaration of Independence up through the administrations of Washington, Adams, and Jefferson.

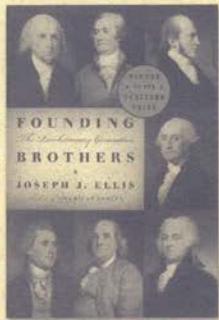
Partly because it's such a fascinating story, Ellis begins with the 1804 duel in which Aaron Burr shot Alexander Hamilton. Exactly what happened that July morning at a secluded spot along

the Hudson River across from Manhattan is still disputed, but the duel effectively ended Burr's political career as well as Hamilton's life. Burr was vice president of the United States at the time. Ellis gives a fine character sketch of Burr, the most famous but least admirable of Jonathan Edwards' many grandchildren. "If Washington was the epitome of the virtuous leader who subordinated political interest to the public good," Ellis writes, "Burr was a kind of anti-Washington, who manipulated the public interest for his own inscrutable purposes."

Much of the value of this book is its focus on *character*. We see the strengths and foibles, and sometimes conflicting motives, of these key players in the story of the early republic as they interacted with each other. Ellis shows how Jefferson was capable of high ideals but also of political infighting, for example in undermining the presidency of John Adams when Jefferson was vice president. "Jefferson was the kind of man who could have passed a lie-detector test confirming his integrity, believing as he did that the supreme significance of his larger cause rendered conventional distinctions between truth and falsehood superfluous." Jefferson was a master of self-deception, Ellis argues, denying his inconsistencies – most glaringly in the disjunction between his theory and practice when it came to slavery.

One might wish that Ellis had given more attention to the religious views and backgrounds of these "founding brothers." Still, this is a masterful piece both of history and of storytelling.

— Howard A. Snyder, *Asbury Theological Seminary*



Non-Profit Organization
U.S. Postage
PAID
Indianapolis, IN
Permit No. 8783

Free Methodist Church of North America
Free Methodist Historical Society
Box 535002
Indianapolis, IN 46253-5002
(800) 342-5531